



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Director of Children and Family Services

At its meeting held May 17, 2005, the Board took the following action:

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Supervisor Molina made the following statement:

“In June 2003, shortly after the closure of MacLaren Children’s Center, the Board learned that children and youth were spending nights at the Department of Children and Family Services’ (DCFS) Emergency Response Command Post (ERCP). At that time, the Board directed DCFS to take immediate corrective action. On May 5, 2005, the California Department of Social Services’ (CDSS) Community Care Licensing (CCL) Division cited DCFS for operating an unlicensed facility at its ERCP. It is troublesome that a problem, previously acknowledged by DCFS, has resulted in sanctions by a regulatory agency.

“In a report dated May 5, 2005, DCFS acknowledged that a percentage of children and youth continued to stay at ERCP for four or more hours as they awaited placement; and informed the Board of measures in place to address the problem. In the last year, from April 2004 through April 2005, DCFS successfully placed approximately 75% of all children and youth who came to the ERCP within four hours into the most appropriate setting that would meet their needs. However, for the remainder, the complex issue of overstays is due, in part, to the Department’s practice improvement measures related to its priority of placing children with their relatives and, most notably, due to systemic challenges related to serving the older and hard-to-place youth who have emotional, behavioral, substance abuse and/or criminal histories.

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“These youth need a place to receive support as they await placement, however, their long-term placement stability requires implementation of innovative measures, in consultation with CCL, to assure that they are placed in licensed facilities that are best suited to meet their specific needs. For youth ages 15 to 17, this requires the holding of group homes accountable to the terms of their existing performance/outcomes-based contracts. For youth ages 18 to 21, this requires licensed resources to accommodate the placement of adults. Ultimately, the Board needs assurances that any action it approves will address the systemic barriers contributing to ‘RCP overstays,’ and that such actions be fully implemented and routinely monitored.

Dr. David Sanders, Director of Children and Family Services, Anthony Bravo, representing SEIU-Local 535, Bruce Saltzer, representing the Association of Community Human Service Agencies, and Dorothy Loehl addressed the Board.

After discussion, on motion of Supervisor Molina, seconded by Supervisor Knabe, unanimously carried, the Director of Children and Family Services was instructed to:

1. Report back to the Board within seven days on immediate steps taken to address “Emergency Response Command Post (ERCP) overstays,” including increasing the availability of emergency shelter beds;
2. Provide the Board with monthly reports for the next year, which track the number of emergency shelter beds and length of time children are spending at ERCP, with report to include the age of the foster youth, length of stay at the ERCP and other Department of Children and Family Services' offices, placement history (e.g., relative care, foster home, group home), and reason for discharge;
3. Report back to the Board within 30 days on possible short-term and long-term solutions, which specifically address the placement needs of the more difficult-to-place population of children and youth.

In addition, the Director of Children and Family Services was instructed to work with the Association of Community Human Service Agencies and Group Homes toward resolution of the placement needs of the more difficult-to-place population of children and youth.

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